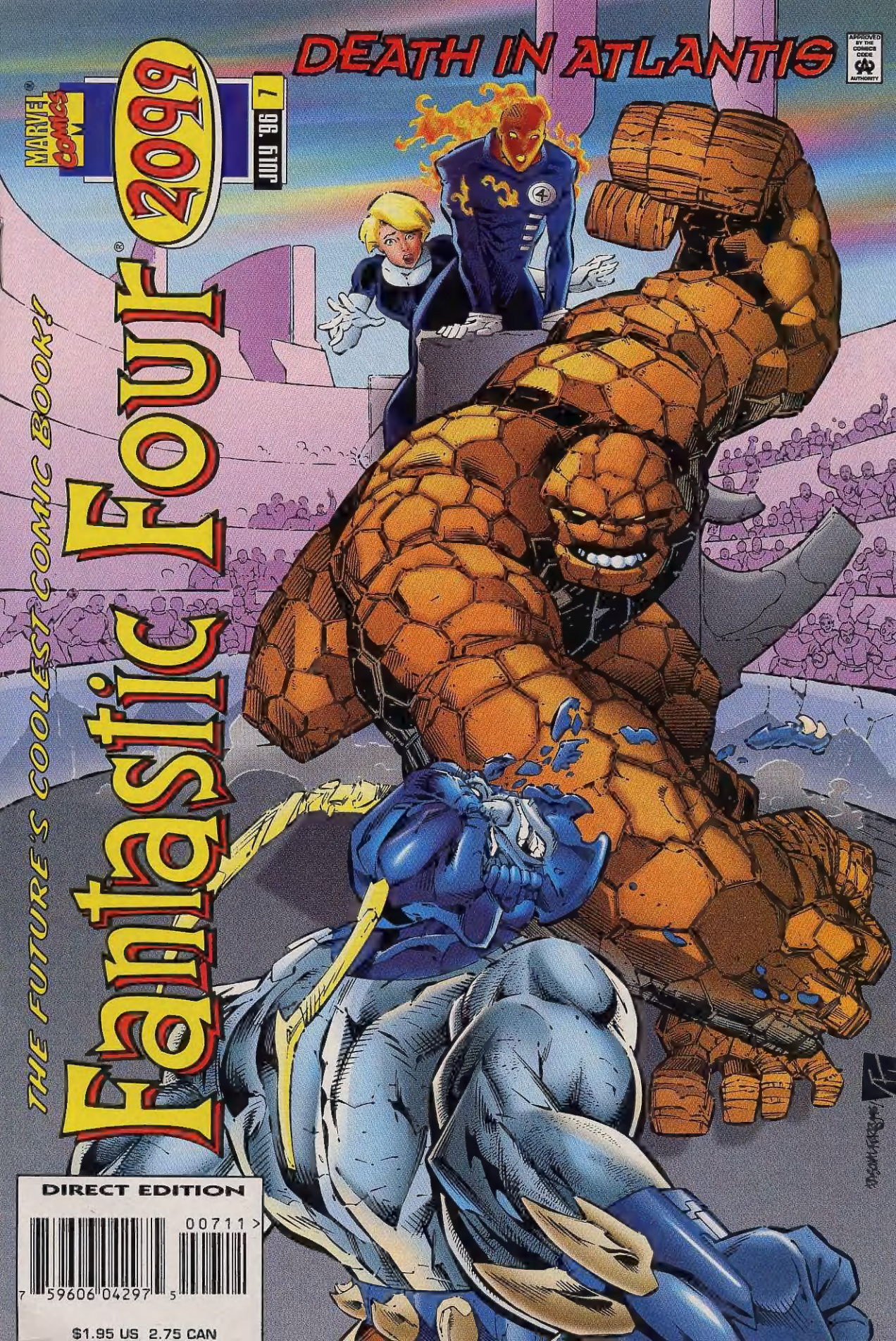
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THE FUTURE'S COOLEST COMIC BOOK!
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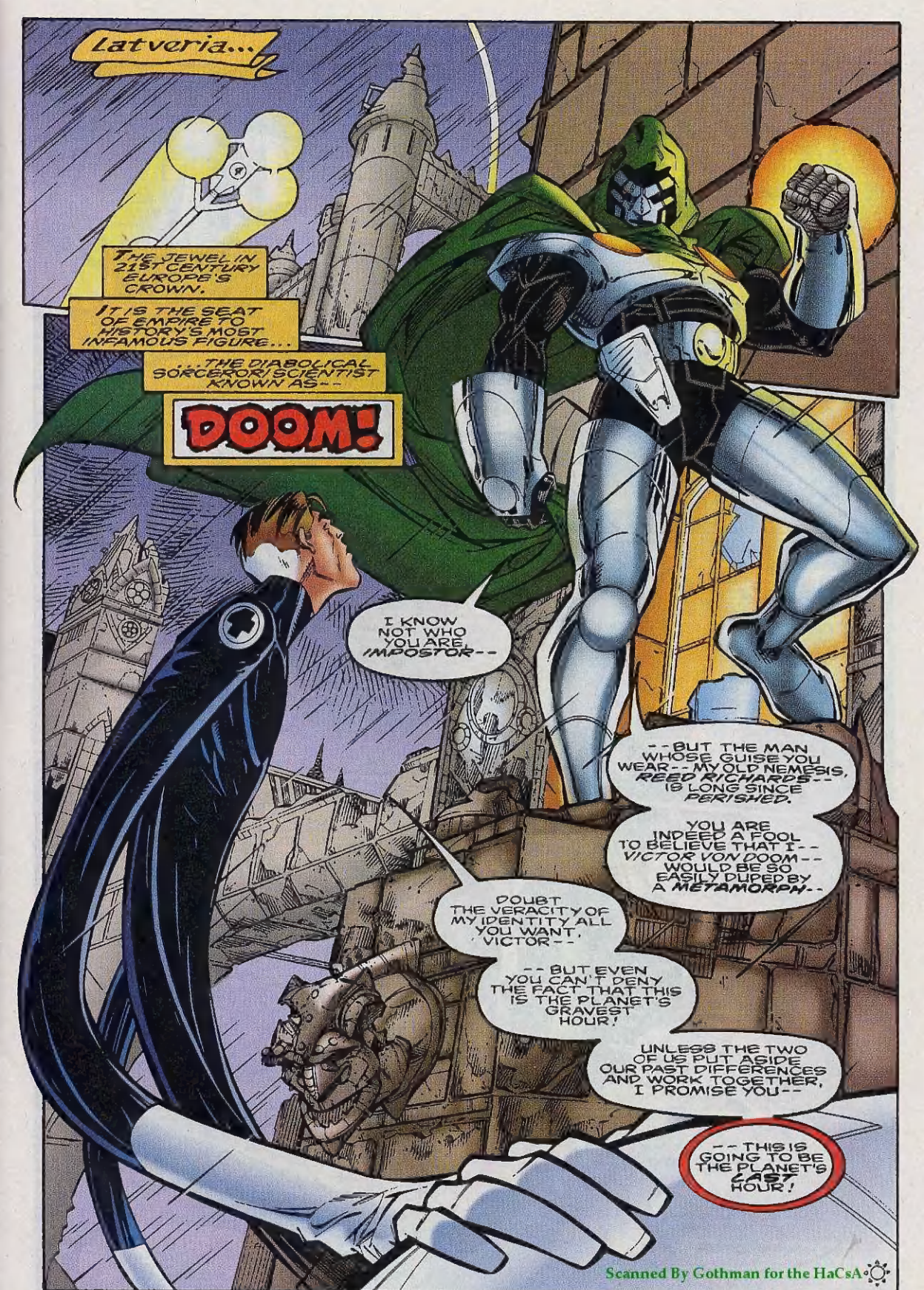
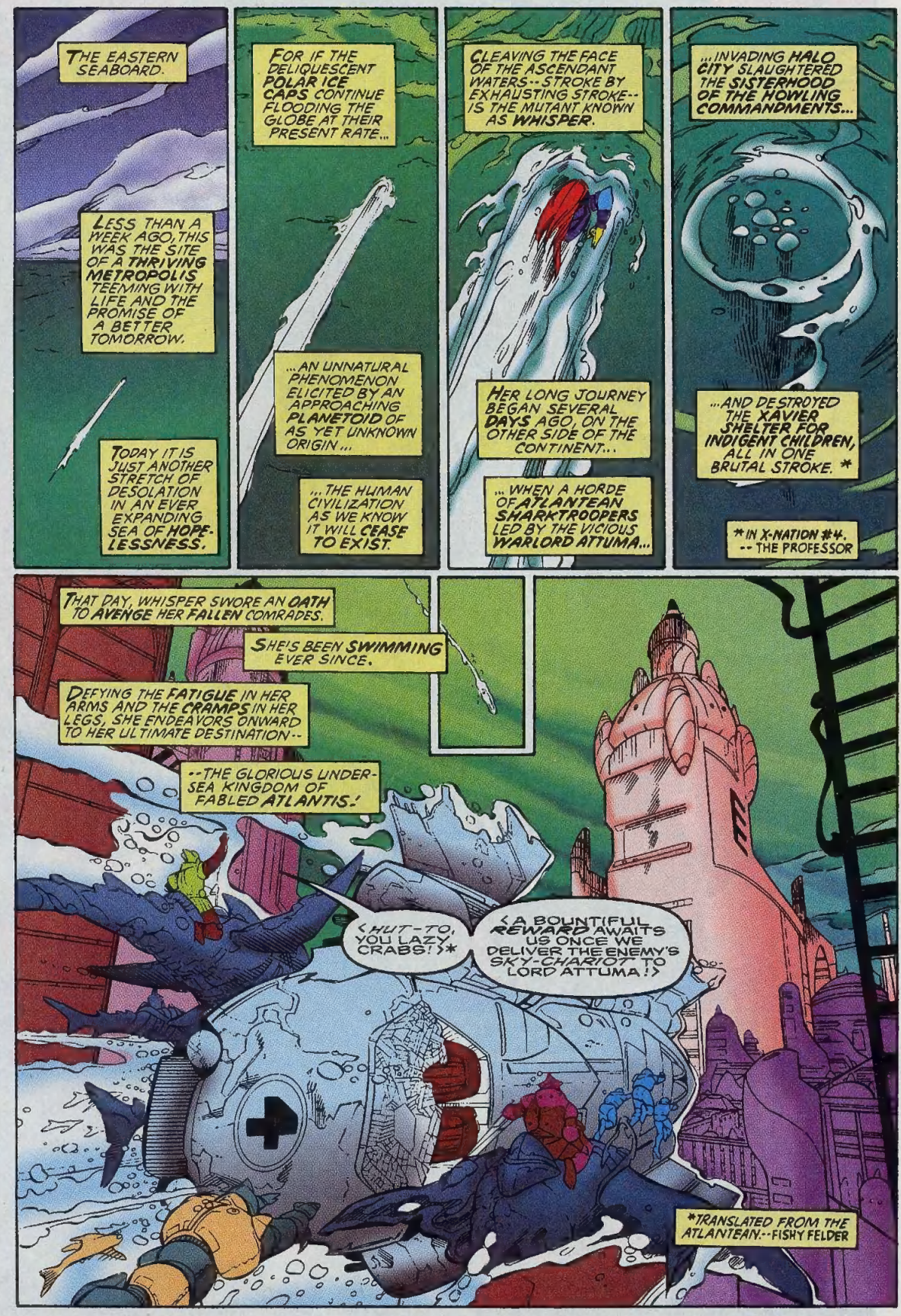

Latveria...
THE JEWEL IN 21ST CENTURY EUROPE'S CROWN.
IT IS THE SEAT OF EMPIRE TO HISTORY'S MOST INFAMOUS FIGURE...
...THE DIABOLICAL SORCEROR/SCIENTIST KNOWN AS--
DOOM!
I KNOW NOT WHO YOU ARE, IMPOSTOR--
--BUT THE MAN WHOSE GUISE YOU WEAR--MY OLD NEMESIS, REED RICHARDS--IS LONG SINCE PERISHED.
YOU ARE INDEED A FOOL TO BELIEVE THAT I--VICTOR VON DOOM--WOULD BE SO EASILY DUPED BY A METAMORPH--
DOUBT THE VERACITY OF MY IDENTITY ALL YOU WANT, VICTOR--
--BUT EVEN YOU CAN'T DENY THE FACT THAT THIS IS THE PLANET'S GRAVEST HOUR!
UNLESS THE TWO OF US PUT ASIDE OUR PAST DIFFERENCES AND WORK TOGETHER, I PROMISE YOU--
--THIS IS GOING TO BE THE PLANET'S LAST HOUR!

Scanned By Gothman for the HaCsA

FANTASTIC FOUR 2099™ Vol. 1, No. 7, July, 1996. Published by MARVEL COMICS. Gerard Calabrese, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY 10016. **Second class postage is pending at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.** Published monthly. Copyright © 1996 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $1.95 per copy in the U.S. and $2.75 in Canada. Subscription rate for 12 issues: $23.40 U.S.; $35.40 foreign; and Canadian subscribers must add $10.00 for postage and GST. GST #R127032852. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shell not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. FANTASTIC FOUR 2099 (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. **POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO FANTASTIC FOUR 2099, c/o MARVEL DIRECT MARKETING CORP. SUBSCRIPTION DEPT. P.O. BOX 1979, DANBURY, CT. 06813-1979. TELEPHONE # (203) 743-5331. PRINTED IN USA.**

AND IF YOU ARE INDEED WHO YOU CLAIM TO BE--
YOU PLAY WITH FIRE IMPLYING I AM NOT WHO I SAY, "MISTER FANTASTIC"--
--FOR I AM THE POWER AND THE GLORY THAT NOW AND SHALL FOREVER BE LATVERIA!
I AM DOOM!
THEN YOU KNOW THAT THE NATURAL CATASTROPHES RAVAGING THE GLOBE--
--ARE DUE TO AN ANOMALOUS CELESTIAL BODY HURTLING THROUGH OUR SOLAR SYSTEM--
--ON A DIRECT COLLISION COURSE WITH EARTH!
OF THIS I AM ALREADY AWARE. WHAT IS YOUR POINT?
THAT BY DOING NOTHING TO HALT THE ANOMALY'S PROGRESS, YOU NOT ONLY ABANDON THE CITIZENS OF THE WORLD--
--BUT YOU CONDEMN YOUR OWN LOYAL SUBJECTS TO CERTAIN DEATH.
VICTOR-- OLD FRIEND-- I WOULDN'T HAVE COME HERE IF I DIDN'T NEED YOU--
--IF I DIDN'T NEED YOUR HELP...
REED RICHARDS WAS NEVER MY FRIEND.
ENEMY, YES.
ATTEMPTED RIVAL.
ONLY HE WOULD MAKE THAT MISTAKE OF ONCE THINKING DOOM... FRIEND.
WHOOOSH
VERY WELL, RICHARDS... YOU MAY CALL DOOM ALLY...
FOR THE SAKE OF LATVERIA-- FOR THE WORLD-- FOR NOW.


THE EASTERN SEABOARD.
LESS THAN A WEEK AGO, THIS WAS THE SITE OF A THRIVING METROPOLIS TEEMING WITH LIFE AND THE PROMISE OF A BETTER TOMORROW.
TODAY IT IS JUST ANOTHER STRETCH OF DESOLATION IN AN EVER EXPANDING SEA OF HOPELESSNESS.
FOR IF THE DELIQUESCENT POLAR ICE CAPS CONTINUE FLOODING THE GLOBE AT THEIR PRESENT RATE...
...AN UNNATURAL PHENOMENON ELICITED BY AN APPROACHING PLANETOID OF AS YET UNKNOWN ORIGIN...
...THE HUMAN CIVILIZATION AS WE KNOW IT WILL CEASE TO EXIST.
CLEAVING THE FACE OF THE ASCENDANT WATERS--STROKE BY EXHAUSTING STROKE--IS THE MUTANT KNOWN AS WHISPER.
HER LONG JOURNEY BEGAN SEVERAL DAYS AGO, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CONTINENT...
...WHEN A HORDE OF ATLANTEAN SHARKTROOPERS LED BY THE VICIOUS WARLORD ATTUMA...
...INVADING HALO CITY SLAUGHTERED THE SISTERHOOD OF THE HOWLING COMMANDMENTS...
...AND DESTROYED THE XAVIER SHELTER FOR INDIGENT CHILDREN, ALL IN ONE BRUTAL STROKE. *
*IN X-NATION #4. -- THE PROFESSOR
THAT DAY, WHISPER SWORE AN OATH TO AVENGE HER FALLEN COMRADES.
SHE'S BEEN SWIMMING EVER SINCE.
DEFYING THE FATIGUE IN HER ARMS AND THE CRAMPS IN HER LEGS, SHE ENDEAVORS ONWARD TO HER ULTIMATE DESTINATION--
--THE GLORIOUS UNDERSEA KINGDOM OF FABLED ATLANTIS!
<HUT-TO, YOU LAZY CRABS!>*
<A BOUNTIFUL REWARD AWAITS US ONCE WE DELIVER THE ENEMY'S SKY-CHARIOT TO LORD ATTUMA!>
*TRANSLATED FROM THE ATLANTEAN.--FISHY FELDER

I RECOGNIZE THAT "SKY-CHARIOT" FROM THE LEGEND SCROLLS I READ AS A CHILD. IF MEMORY SERVES--
--AFTER ALL, IT'S BEEN YEARS SINCE I WAS EXILED--
--IT BELONGED TO AN EXTRAORDINARY QUARTET OF SURFACE-DWELLERS WHO WERE ALLIES OF OUR HOLY PRINCE NAMOR DURING THE HEROIC AGES OF YORE.
BY THE SACRED TRIDENT-- THOSE PEOPLE... CAN IT REALLY BE THEM?!?
IF THE LEGENDS ARE TRUE, THEN THAT'S THE HUMAN TORCH--
--AND THE INVISIBLE WOMAN--
--AND THE THING!
ATTUMA, YOU COWARD-- LAY OFFA HIM!
SOME "WARLORD" YOU ARE! DON'T YOU EVEN HAVE THE COURAGE TO FACE YOUR PRISONERS UNSHACKLED?
Stan Lee PROUDLY PRESENTS THE FUTURE'S COOLEST COMIC BOOK HEROES IN:
AN OLD SCORE TO SETTLE
BEN RAAB & TERRY KAVANAGH • STORY
BEN RAAB • SCRIPT PASCUAL FERRY • PENCILS
MENDOZA/TNIBERT • INKS JANICE CHIANG • LETTERS
PAUL BECTON • COLORS PROFESSOR FELPER • EDITOR
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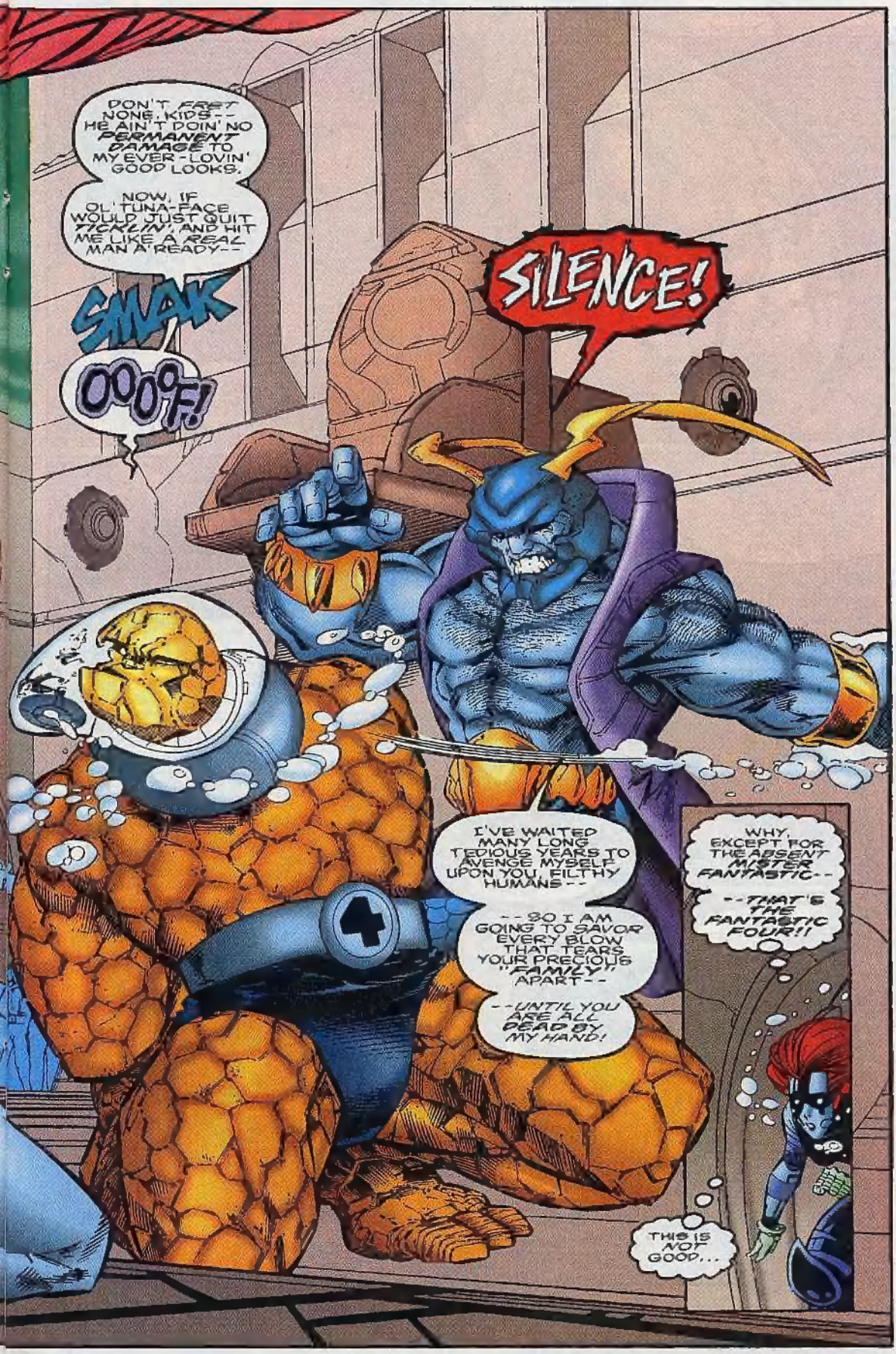
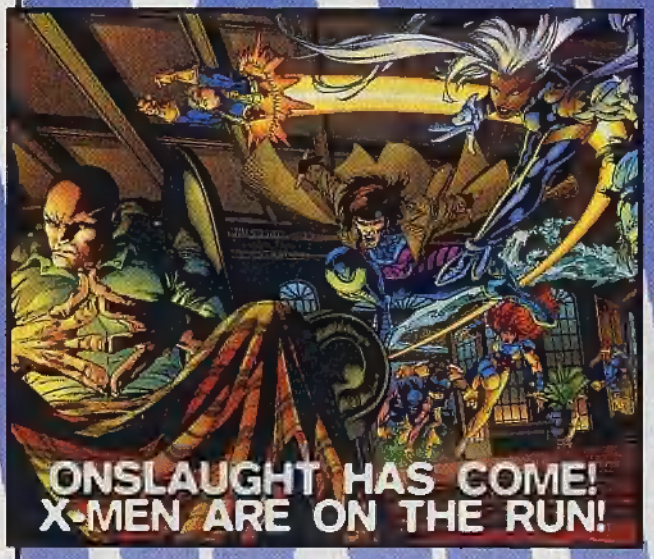

DON'T FAST NONE, KIDS-- HE AIN'T DOIN' NO PERMANENT DAMAGE TO MY EVER-LOVIN' GOOD LOOKS.
NOW, IF OL' TUNA-FACE WOULD JUST QUIT TICKLIN', AND HIT ME LIKE A REAL MAN A'READY--
SMAK
OOOF!
SILENCE!
I'VE WAITED MANY LONG TEDIOUS YEARS TO AVENGE MYSELF UPON YOU, FILTHY HUMANS--
--SO I AM GOING TO SAVOR EVERY BLOW THAT TEARS YOUR PRECIOUS "FAMILY" APART--
--UNTIL YOU ARE ALL DEAD BY MY HAND!
WHY, EXCEPT FOR THE ABSENT MISTER FANTASTIC--
--THAT'S THE FANTASTIC FOUR!!
THIS IS NOT GOOD...

YER A HECKUVA LOT WEAKER THAN YA WAS BACK IN THE DAY, EVEBREATH. WHATSAMATTER?
OLD AGE FINALLY CATCHIN' UP WIT' YA?!?!
ON THE CONTRARY, GRIMM.
I AM EVEN MIGHTIER THAN I WAS DURING OUR FIRST BOUT OF FISTICUFFS, LO THOSE MANY YEARS AGO.* A PITY YOU CANNOT SAY THE SAME.
YOUR BRAVE FACES BETRAY THE IMPOTENCE OF BEING UNABLE TO USE YOUR FORMIDABLE ABILITIES--
--I TAKE IT THE INHIBITOR DEVICES PLUNDERED FROM THE SURFACE-WORLD HAVE SUCCESSFULLY RENDERED YOU ALL POWERLESS.
EXCELLENT!
FOR COME THE MORROW, YOU THREE SHALL BE MERCIFULLY UNBURDENED OF EXISTENCE'S MISERABLE WEIGHT...
*WAAAAY BACK IN THE CLASSIC FANTASTIC FOUR #33.--THE PROFESSOR
<GUARDS!!! PREPARE OUR GUESTS FOR THIS EVENING'S FEAST. THEY ARE TO BE THE NIGHT'S ENTERTAINMENT!>
<AYE, SIR! ALL HAIL ATTUMA!!>
<MOVE IT, YOU SURFACE-DWELLING PARASITES!>
HEY! WATCH WHERE YER POKIN' THAT PIGSTICKER!
SHEESH! WOTTA REVOLTIN' DEVELOPMENT!
I'LL SAY! WONDER WHAT HE MEANT ABOUT US BEING "ENTERTAINMENT"...



It's been building up for some time. You've heard the rumors, the theories, the whispers. Now, it's finally here: the big event you've all been waiting for! The identity of the X-traitor – a mystery for several years now – is finally revealed! And Onslaught – perhaps the greatest Marvel Universe villain of all time – finally confronts all your favorite heroes in a battle like no other, one that will shatter their world like never before!

This is what you'll find in ONSLAUGHT: X-MEN, a special 48-page, no ad, one-shot *on sale next week!* It's written by *Scott Lobdell* and *Mark Waid*, with beautiful artwork by *Adam Kubert, Rascal Ferry, Dan Green* and *Art Thibert!* But great writers, amazing artists and a totally kickin' story are only the beginning!

"This is the X-Men's darkest hour, and will escalate into the greatest threat to ever hit the Marvel Universe," explains *Bob Harras*, Marvel Editor in Chief and X-Men Big Kahuna. "This storyline will have a profound effect on the Marvel Universe as a whole, and we'll be feeling the ramifications for a long time after it's over."

The storyline will touch every Marvel Universe title in a major way, most profoundly upon UNCANNY X-MEN, X-MEN, X-MAN, CABLE, the AVENGERS and the FANTASTIC FOUR, and will conclude in ONSLAUGHT: MARVEL UNIVERSE, another 48-page, no ad, one-shot that will be *on sale the first week of August!*

The past is merely prologue.

The present and future of the Marvel Universe are about to be decided, and ONSLAUGHT is where you'll find the action – and the answers!

BULLPEN BULLETINS

CAPTAIN AMERICA FACES THE FUTURE

Next week, CAPTAIN AMERICA #454 hits the stands, and the star-spangled Avenger bids a fond farewell to *Mark Waid* and *Ron Garney*, the creative team responsible for revitalizing him and bringing him to new heights of excitement and popularity!

For their last outing on Cap, Mark and Ron have put together a story that takes Cap and Sharon Carter on an adventure into enemy territory, reveals more information about Sharon's hidden past, and shows how it all affects her and Cap's present and future! According to editor *Bobbie Chase*, "This is a special issue, in that we salute the creative team that brought CAPTAIN AMERICA so much attention and acclaim recently, and also because it's Cap's last hurrah before he goes off to fight Onslaught!" *Onslaught*, eh? Where have we heard *that* name before?

You can expect high drama, captivating characterizations, and of course, Cap kicking major butt!

PETER PARKER IN "E.R."?

Well, sort of. Next week in SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN #7, written by new regular writer *Todd Dezago* and penciled by *Luke Ross* (soon to take over the penciling chores on SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN), our beloved Peter Parker, the former Spider-Man, is rushed to the emergency room (Emergency Room, "E.R.", get it?) and hospitalized, with symptoms that took very much like the early stages of clone degeneration! And as everyone who reads the Spider-books knows, there's no cure for this condition (Just ask Kaine)! It seems like time has finally run out for everybody's favorite ex-wall-crawler! And Ben Reilly, the current Spidey, can't even be at his "brother's" side, because he has to stop a guy who's trying to kill himself! But that doesn't mean that Peter Parker has to face his fate alone!

"The possibly fatal illness of Peter Parker brings back people you haven't seen in a while," explains new Spider-Man editor *Ralph Macchio*, who looked upon this new story development as the perfect opportunity to bring back the Spider-Man supporting cast. "The most important people in Peter's life gather around him in his dire hour, so there'll be a lot of emotion and a sense of reunion in this issue."

For those readers dying to see more of Spidey's co-stars, both old and new, this one's for you!

CHECKLIST FOR JUNE

AVENGERS UNPLUGGED #6 The Blood Wraith is back – and he wants the Black Knight's cursed sword! *By Glenn Herdling and M.C. Wyman!*

CAPTAIN AMERICA #454 The final fate of Sharon Carter! Is she headed back to the grave? This time, Cap won't accept lies and videotape for an answer! *By Mark Waid and Ron Garney!*

DAREDEVIL #365 Guest-starring the X-Men's enemy, Pyro! The mystery of Mr. Hyde heats up as DD gets scorched by the master of the living flame! *By Karl Kesel and Cary Nord!*

SPIDER-MAN 2099 #45 Final issue! As the Big Apple gets clocked by nothing ice caps, Spider-Man battles the Vultures for the last time! *By Dan Raab, Terry Kavanagh and Mike McKone!*

SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN #7 Peter Parker is rushed to the hospital, with symptoms that look suspiciously like clone degeneration – and baby, there's no cure! *By Todd DeZago and Luke Ross!*

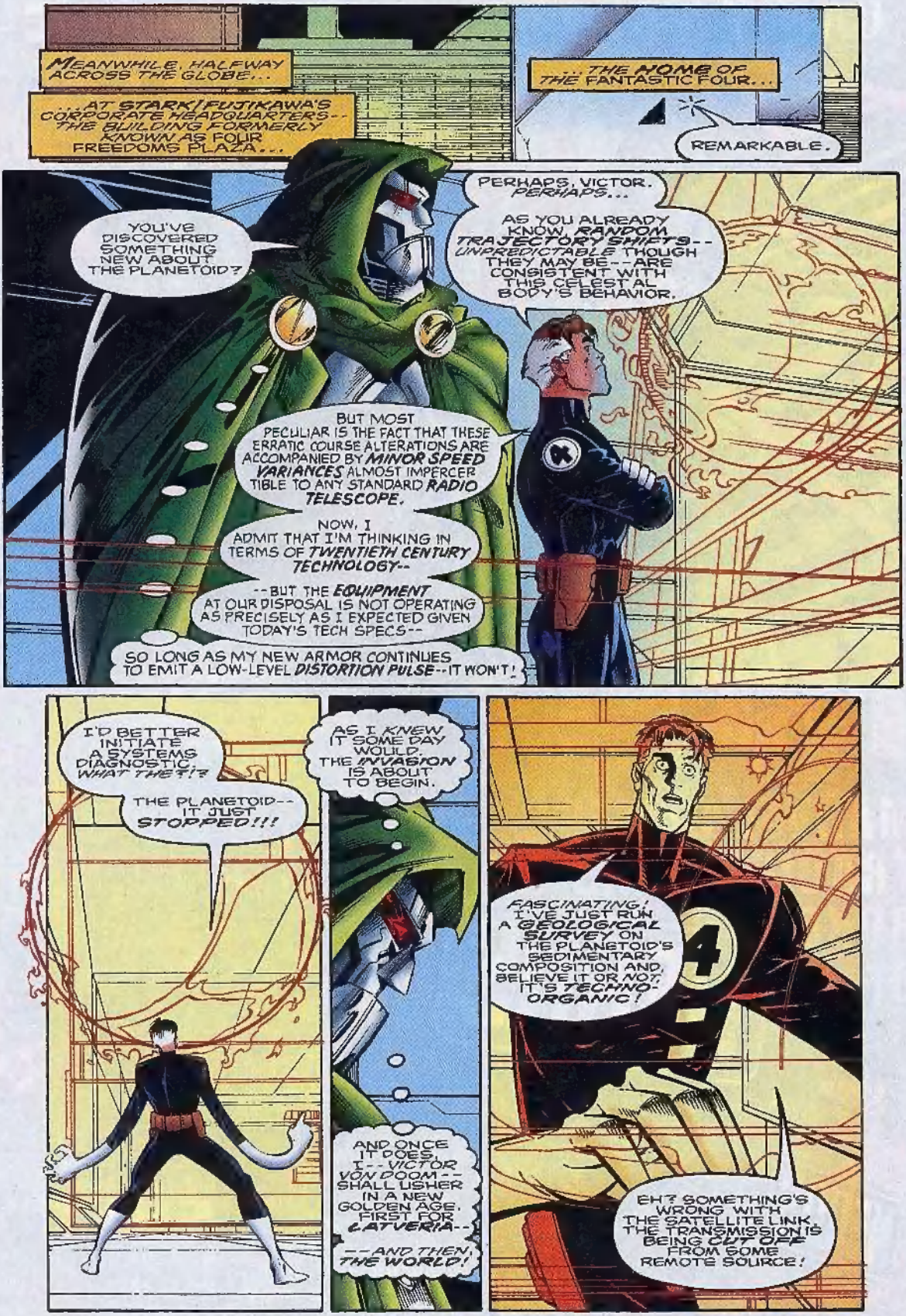
CABLE #34 Cable vs. Onslaught's newest soldier: the Hulk! "Huh? said! *By Jeph Loeb and Ian Churchill!*

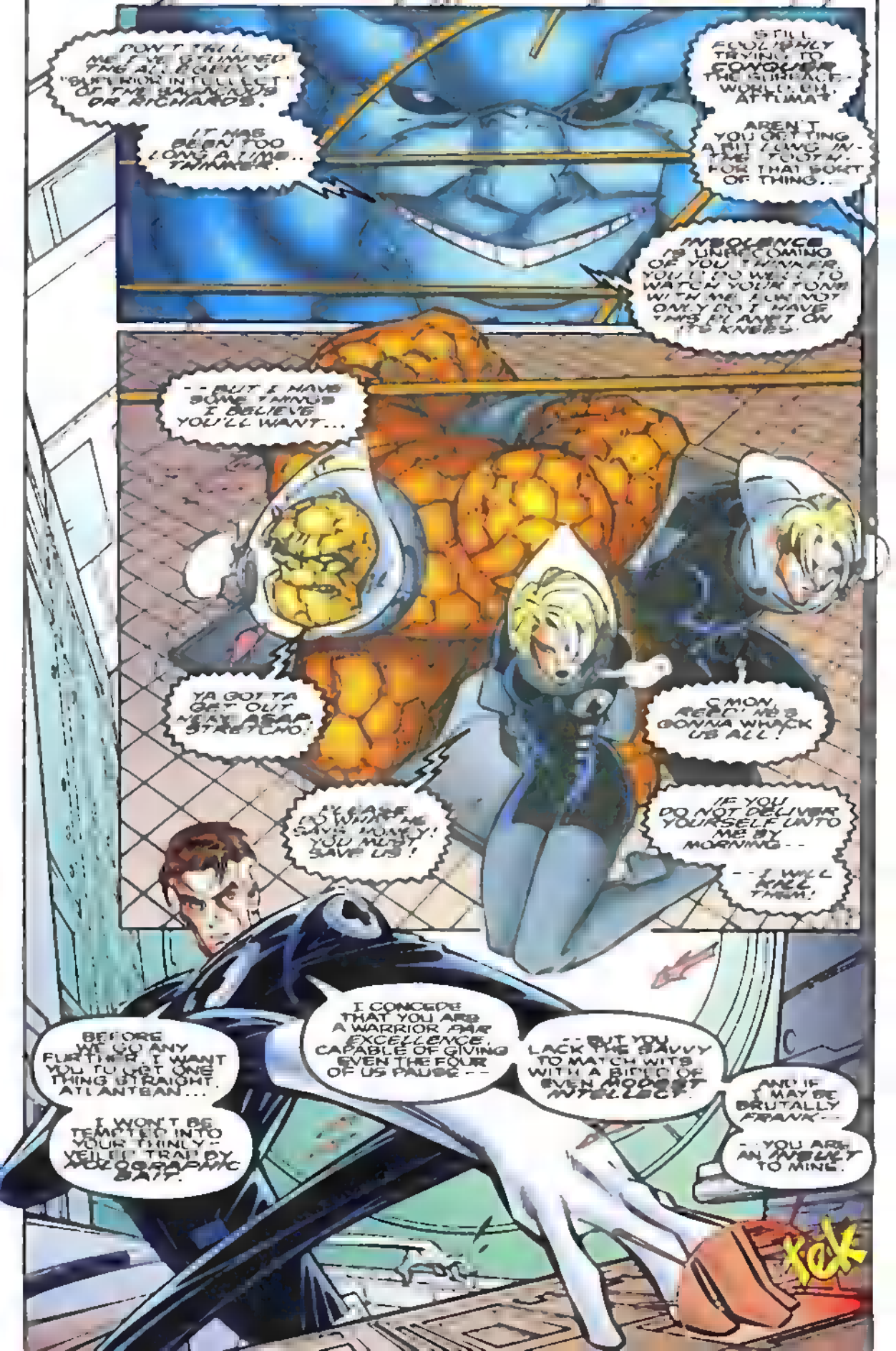
ONSLAUGHT: X-MEN #1 X-Men vs. Onslaught – for the first time! Professor X's troops have faced the agents of Onslaught, but now they meet the real deal! Who, or what, is this menace, what are his plans, and can the X-Men stop him? *By Mark Waid, Scott Lobdell, Adam Kubert and Rascal Ferry!*

UNCANNY X-MEN #335 The Avengers assemble as the Onslaught war begins! Now the X-Men, Earth's Mightiest Heroes and X-Men are taking the fight into the dragon's den! *By Scott Lobdell and Joe Madureira!*

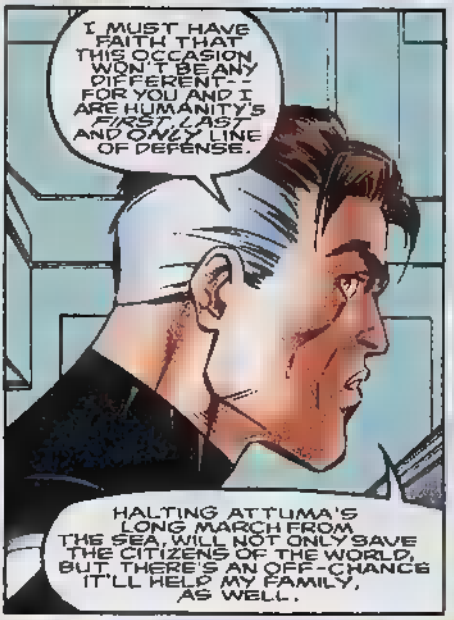
[WISH LIST]

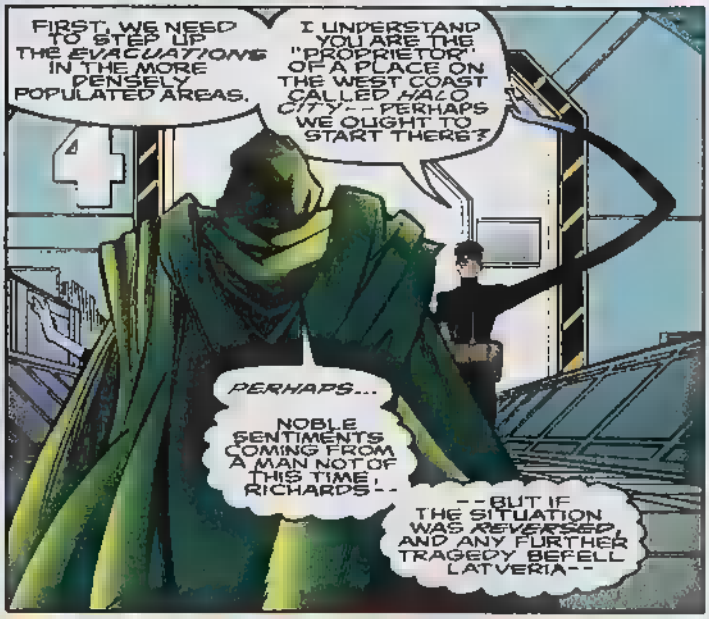
DON'T EVEN THINK FOR A MOMENT THAT WE'RE FINISHED, ATTUMA!
THE FF HAVE BEATEN YOU PLENTY OF TIMES BEFORE--
...AND WE'LL DO IT AGAIN THIS TIME!!!
I DON'T DOUBT THAT YOU'LL TRY... SUSAN.
MAY I CALL YOU THAT? I KNOW HOW YOUR HEART FLUTTERED WHEN YOUR BELOVED NAMOR DID...
HOW HIS ROTTING CORPSE MUST TURN IN ITS GRAVE NOW THAT I, ATTUMA-- THE LOWLY "SHARKAN BARBARIAN"-- NOW POSSESS THE TWO THINGS HE NEVER COULD.
FIRST, I TOOK HIS PRECIOUS KINGDOM OF ATLANTIS--
--AND NOW I TAKE YOU, SUSAN RICHARDS!
SORRY, "BARBARIAN"-- BUT I'M ALREADY TAKEN! SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL KILL ME NOW.
AH, YES--YOUR EVER-SO-CEREBRAL HUSBAND--REED! LONG HAVE I DREAMT OF THE BATTLE THAT WILL DETERMINE WHICH OF US IS THE GREATER STRATEGIST...
AND WHILE IT IS INDEED UNFORTUNATE THAT HE IS NOT PRESENTLY HERE TO DIE BY YOUR SIDE, I PROMISE YOU--
--THAT IS A SITUATION EASILY REMEDIED!

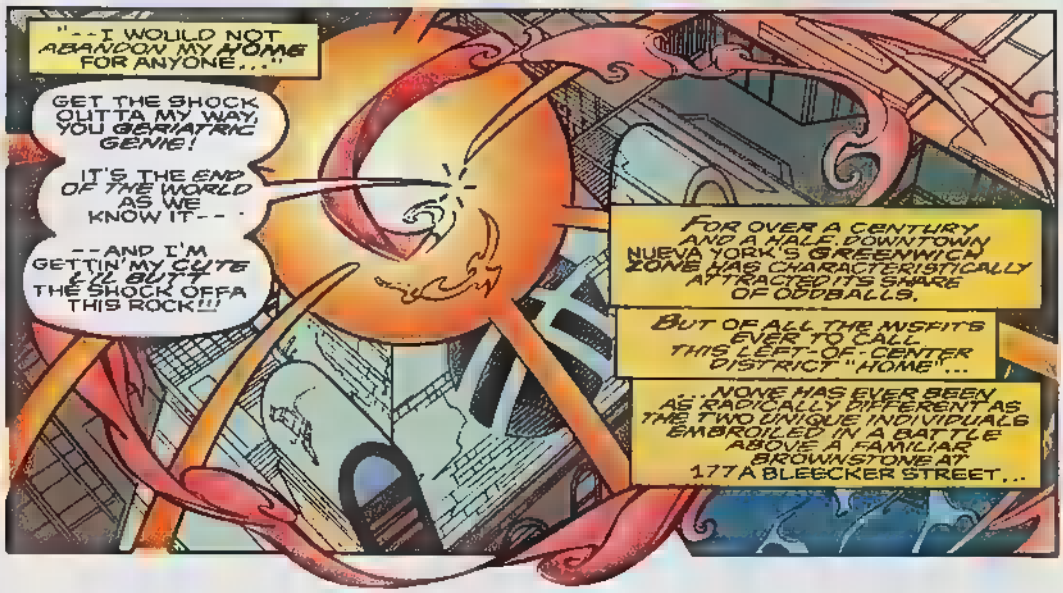

MEANWHILE, HALFWAY ACROSS THE GLOBE...
...AT STARK/FUJIKAWA'S CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS--THE BUILDING FORMERLY KNOWN AS FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA...
...THE HOME OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR...
REMARKABLE.
YOU'VE DISCOVERED SOMETHING NEW ABOUT THE PLANETOID?
PERHAPS, VICTOR. PERHAPS...
AS YOU ALREADY KNOW, RANDOM TRAJECTORY SHIFTS--UNPREDICTABLE THOUGH THEY MAY BE--ARE CONSISTENT WITH THIS CELESTIAL BODY'S BEHAVIOR.
BUT MOST PECULIAR IS THE FACT THAT THESE ERRATIC COURSE ALTERATIONS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY MINOR SPEED VARIANCES ALMOST IMPERCEPTIBLE TO ANY STANDARD RADIO TELESCOPE.
NOW, I ADMIT THAT I'M THINKING IN TERMS OF TWENTIETH CENTURY TECHNOLOGY--
--BUT THE EQUIPMENT AT OUR DISPOSAL IS NOT OPERATING AS PRECISELY AS I EXPECTED GIVEN TODAY'S TECH SPECS--
SO LONG AS MY NEW ARMOR CONTINUES TO EMIT A LOW-LEVEL DISTORTION PULSE--IT WON'T!
I'D BETTER INITIATE A SYSTEMS DIAGNOSTIC. WHAT THE?!?
THE PLANETOID--IT JUST STOPPED!!!
AS I KNEW IT SOME DAY WOULD, THE INVASION IS ABOUT TO BEGIN.
AND ONCE IT DOES, I--VICTOR VON DOOM--SHALL USHER IN A NEW GOLDEN AGE. FIRST FOR LATVERIA--
--AND THEN, THE WORLD!
FASCINATING! I'VE JUST RUN A GEOLOGICAL SURVEY ON THE PLANETOID'S SEDIMENTARY COMPOSITION AND, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IT'S TECHNO-ORGANIC!
EH? SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THE SATELLITE LINK. THE TRANSMISSION IS BEING CUT OFF FROM SOME REMOTE SOURCE!

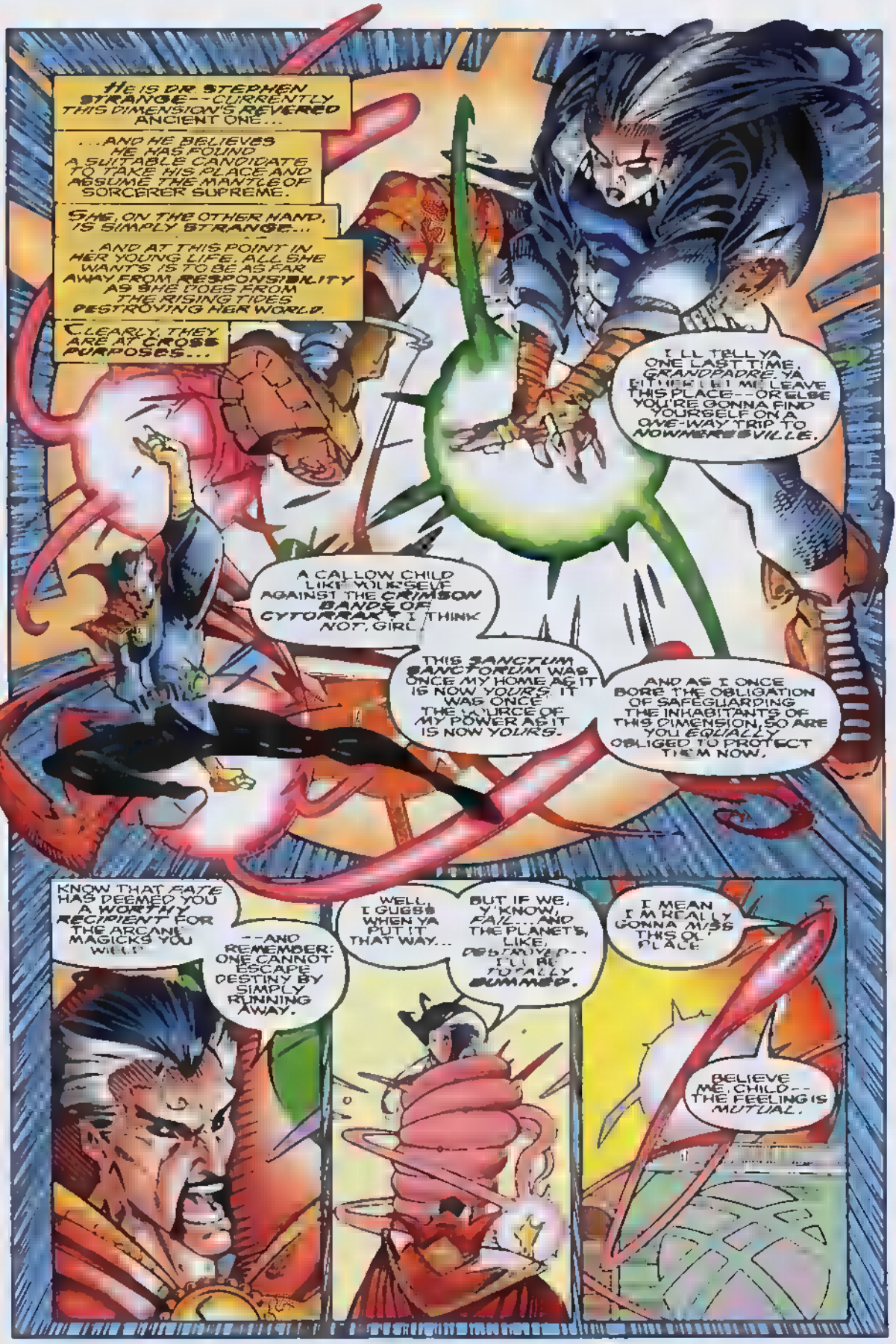

DON'T TELL ME I'VE STUMPED THE ALL KNOWING "BRAIN FROM INTELLECT" OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR OR RICHARDS.
IT HAS BEEN TOO LONG A TIME... THINKER.
STILL FOOLISHLY TRYING TO CONQUER THE SURFACE WORLD, EH, ATTUMA?
AREN'T YOU GETTING A BIT LONG IN THE TOOTH FOR THAT SORT OF THING...
INSOLENCE IS UNBECOMING OF YOU, THINKER. YOU'D DO WELL TO WATCH YOUR TONE WITH ME. I CAN NOT ONLY DO IT, I HAVE THIS PLANET ON ITS KNEES.
--BUT I HAVE SOME THINGS I BELIEVE YOU'LL WANT...
YA GOTTA GET OUT HERE ASAP, STRETCHO!
C'MON, REED! WE'RE GONNA WHACK US ALL!
IF YOU DO NOT DELIVER YOURSELF UNTO ME BY MORNING--
--I WILL KILL THEM!
IT'S A SAFE BET HE'LL WANT HIS SAVIN' MONEY! YOU MUST SAVE US!
I CONCEDE THAT YOU ARE A WARRIOR PAR EXCELLENCE, CAPABLE OF GIVING EVEN THE FOUR OF US PAUSE--
--BUT YOU LACK THE SAVVY TO MATCH WITS WITH A BIPED OF EVEN MODEST INTELLECT.
BEFORE WE GO ANY FURTHER, I WANT YOU TO GET ONE THING STRAIGHT, ATLANTEAN...
I WON'T BE TEMPTED INTO YOUR THINLY-VEILED TRAP BY YOUR OBVIOUS BAIT.
AND IF I MAY BE BRUTALLY FRANK--
--YOU ARE AN INSULT TO MINE.
tok

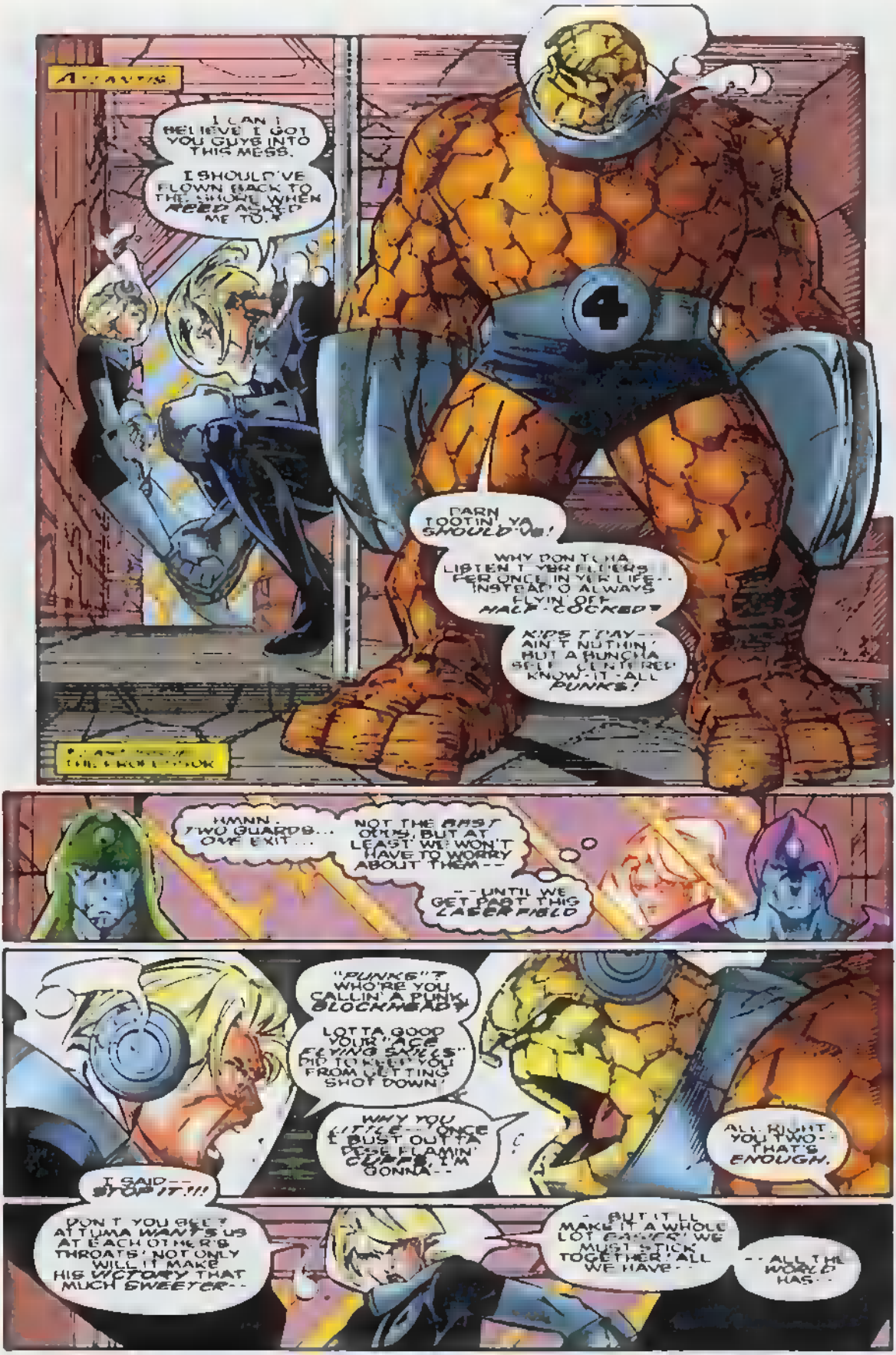
HOLOGRAPHY NOTWITHSTANDING--YOU ALREADY KNOW HE HAS YOUR FAMILY HOSTAGE, RICHARDS.
YET, INSTEAD OF RUSHING TO LIBERATE THEM FROM CERTAIN DESTRUCTION YOU REFUSE TO ABANDON YOUR EFFORTS HERE.
I AM NOT SURE WHETHER TO BE ABSOLUTELY APPALLED--
--OR UTTERLY IMPRESSED!
WHY DON'T I FIND THAT COMFORTING?
YOU'VE SUFFERED THE PAIN OF LOSING SOMEONE YOU LOVE AS MUCH AS LIFE ITSELF--IF NOT MORE--VICTOR...
...SO YOU CAN IMAGINE HOW BADLY IT'S TEARING ME APART NOT TO BE WITH MY FAMILY DURING THEIR HOUR OF NEED.
BUT YOU--OF ALL PEOPLE--CAN ALSO ATTEST TO THE FACT THAT WE'VE WEATHERED WORSE STORMS AND STILL COME OUT ON TOP.


I MUST HAVE FAITH THAT THIS OCCASION WON'T BE ANY DIFFERENT--FOR YOU AND I ARE HUMANITY'S FIRST, LAST AND ONLY LINE OF DEFENSE.
HALTING ATTUMA'S LONG MARCH FROM THE SEA, WILL NOT ONLY SAVE THE CITIZENS OF THE WORLD, BUT THERE'S AN OFF-CHANCE IT'LL HELP MY FAMILY, AS WELL.


FIRST, WE NEED TO STEP UP THE EVACUATIONS IN THE MORE DENSELY POPULATED AREAS.
I UNDERSTAND YOU ARE THE "PROPRIETOR" OF A PLACE ON THE WEST COAST CALLED HALO CITY--PERHAPS WE OUGHT TO START THERE?
PERHAPS...
NOBLE SENTIMENTS COMING FROM A MAN NOT OF THIS TIME, RICHARDS--
--BUT IF THE SITUATION WAS REVERSED AND ANY FURTHER TRAGEDY BEFELL LATVERIA--


"--I WOULD NOT ABANDON MY HOME FOR ANYONE..."
GET THE SHOCK OUTTA MY WAY, YOU GERIATRIC GENIE!
IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT--
--AND I'M GETTIN' MY CUTE LIL BUTT THE SHOCK OFFA THIS ROCK!!!
FOR OVER A CENTURY AND A HALF, DOWNTOWN NUEVA YORK'S GREENWICH ZONE HAS CHARACTERISTICALLY ATTRACTED ITS SHARE OF ODDBALLS.
BUT OF ALL THE WISPITS EVER TO CALL THIS LEFT-OF-CENTER DISTRICT "HOME"...
...NONE HAS EVER BEEN AS RADICALLY DIFFERENT AS THE TWO UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS EMBROILED IN A BATTLE ABOVE A FAMILIAR BROWNSTONE AT 177A BLEECKER STREET...


HE IS DR. STEPHEN STRANGE--CURRENTLY THIS DIMENSION'S REVERED ANCIENT ONE...
...AND HE BELIEVES HE HAS FOUND A SUITABLE CANDIDATE TO TAKE HIS PLACE AND ASSUME THE MANTLE OF SORCERER SUPREME.
SHE, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS SIMPLY BTRANGE...
...AND AT THIS POINT IN HER YOUNG LIFE, ALL SHE WANTS IS TO BE AS FAR AWAY FROM RESPONSIBILITY AS SHE DOES FROM THE RISING TIDES DESTROYING HER WORLD.
CLEARLY, THEY ARE AT CROSS PURPOSES...
I'LL TELL YA ONE LAST TIME, GRANDPADRE, YA BITTER OLD MAN! LEAVE THIS PLACE--OR ELSE YOU'RE GONNA FIND YOURSELF ON A ONE-WAY TRIP TO NOWHERESVILLE.
A CALLOW CHILD LIKE YOURSELF AGAINST THE CRIMSON BANDS OF CYTORRAK? I THINK NOT, GIRL.
THIS SANCTUM SANCTORUM WAS ONCE MY HOME AS IT IS NOW YOURS. IT WAS ONCE THE SOURCE OF MY POWER AS IT IS NOW YOURS.
AND AS I ONCE BORE THE OBLIGATION OF SAFEGUARDING THE INHABITANTS OF THIS DIMENSION, SO ARE YOU LEGALLY OBLIGED TO PROTECT THEM NOW.
KNOW THAT FATE HAS DEEMED YOU A WORTHY RECIPIENT FOR THE ARCANE MAGICKS YOU WIELD!
--AND REMEMBER: ONE CANNOT ESCAPE DESTINY BY SIMPLY RUNNING AWAY.
WELL, I GUESS WHEN YA PUT IT THAT WAY...
BUT IF WE, Y'KNOW, FAIL--AND THE PLANET'S, LIKE, DEVASTATED--I'LL BE TOTALLY BUMMED.
I MEAN I'M REALLY GONNA MISS THIS OL' PLACE.
BELIEVE ME, CHILD--THE FEELING IS MUTUAL.


I CAN I BELIEVE I GOT YOU GUYS INTO THIS MESS.
I SHOULD'VE FLOWN BACK TO THE SHORE WHEN REED ASKED ME TO.
DARN TOOTIN' YA SHOULD'VE!
WHY DON'CHA LISTEN T' YER ELDERS FER ONCE IN YER LIFE-- INSTEAD O' ALWAYS FLYIN' OFF HALF-COCKED!
KIDS T'DAY-- AIN'T NUTHIN' BUT A BUNCHA SELF-CENTERED KNOW-IT-ALL PUNKS!
HMNN. TWO GUARDS... ONE EXIT...
NOT THE BEST ODDS, BUT AT LEAST WE WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THEM--
--UNTIL WE GET PAST THIS ZABER FIELD
"PUNKS"? WHO'RE YOU CALLIN' A PUNK BLOCKHEAD?
LOT'A GOOD YOUR "ACE FLYING SKILLS" DID TO KEEP YOU FROM GETTING SHOT DOWN!
WHY YOU LITTLE-- ONCE I BUST OUTTA THIS ELAMIN' CUFF, I'M GONNA--
ALL RIGHT YOU TWO-- THAT'S ENOUGH.
I SAID-- STOP IT!!!
DON'T YOU SEE? ATTUMA WANTS US AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS! NOT ONLY WILL IT MAKE HIS VICTORY THAT MUCH SWEETER--
--BUT IT'LL MAKE IT A WHOLE LOT EASIER IF WE MUST STICK TOGETHER! ALL WE HAVE--
--ALL THE WORLD HAS--

--IS THE FANTASTIC FOUR, EH?
AN UNFORTUNATE INCONVENIENCE THAT IS SOON TO BE RECTIFIED, LAND-APE.
PREPARE HER FOR THE TREATMENT.
HEY! LET ME GO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
tsst
uhnnh...
SUZIE!!!
GUARDS--THE PRISONER SEEKS TO RESIST! HARPOON HIM!!
k'sang k'rang
ARE YOU KIDDIN'?! AIN'T NO HARPOON BEEN MADE THAT CAN HURT OL' MAMA GRIMM'S BABY BOY!
SO, YA BEST GET YER SLIMY FINS OFF A SUZIE, YA STINKIN' MUDSKIPPERS--
--'CUZ POWER INHIBITORS OR NOT--
IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!!!
KER-RAAK!!!

AWRIGHT-- WHO'S NEXT?!
YOU DUMB ENOUGH T' TRY DAT MOJECTION SCHTICK WITH THE TOUGHEST MOOK THIS SIDE O' YANCY STREET?
W-WHY, N-NO! W-WE WOULDN'T TH-THINK OF IT!
YAK
H-HOWEVER... W-WE ARE NOT WITHOUT OUR OWN D-DEFENSES...
OOOO, YA REALLY GOT ME QUAKIN' IN MY GALOSHES THIS TI--
--OY.
I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD...
uhhhhmmhh...
WHUMP
C-CAN'T MOVE A M-MUSCLE! FEELS LIKE...
...CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM...
...SHUTTING DOWN!
MAN. THIS STINKS...

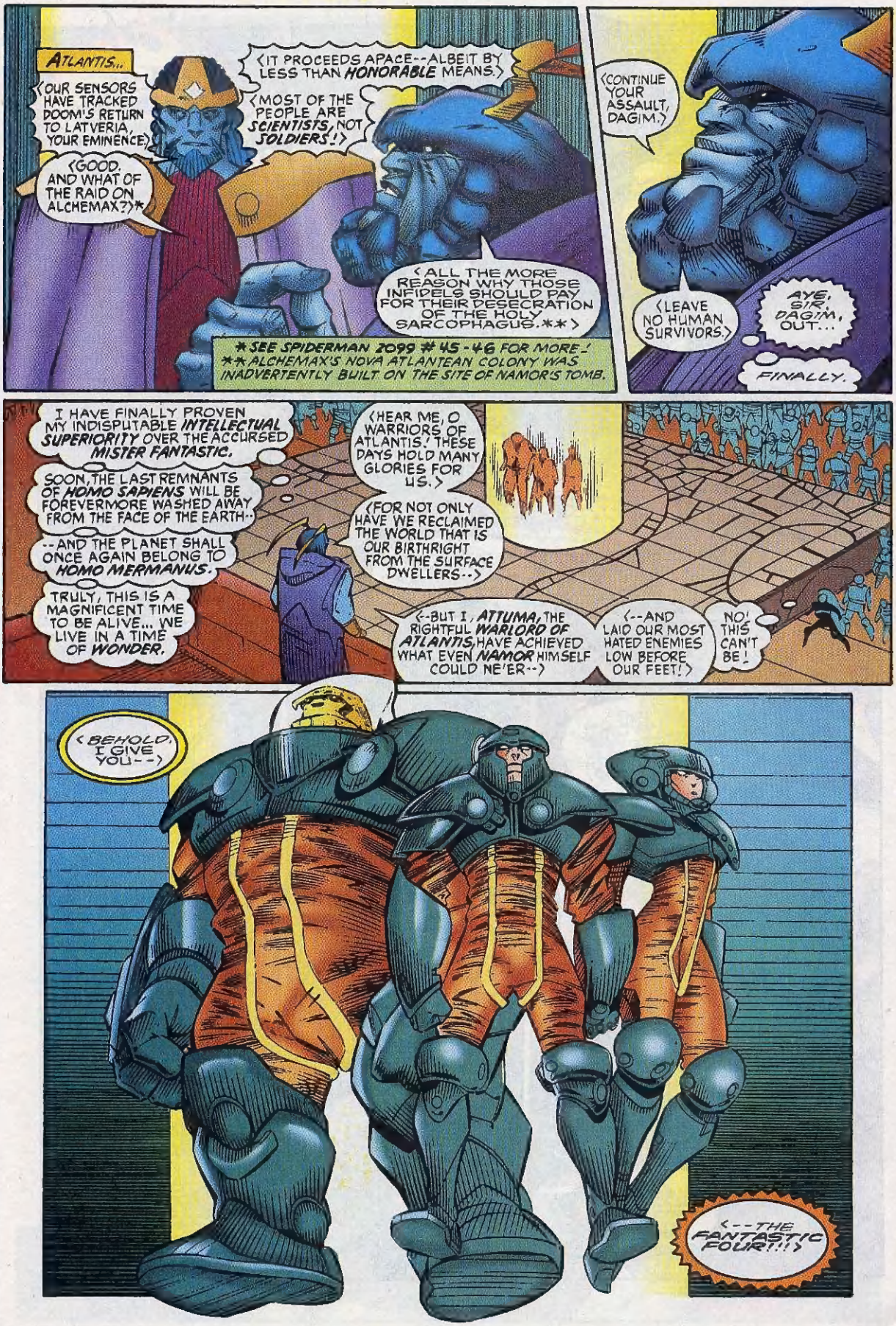
AND AS THE COMATOSE HEROES ARE SHUFFLED ALONG...
THE SURFACE DWELLERS-- UNCONSCIOUS?
SOPORIFIC NEUROTOXINS CAPABLE OF INDUCING POST-HYPNOTIC SUSCEPTIBILITY, NO DOUBT.
NICE TO SEE ATTUMA HASN'T CHANGED HIS METHODS FOR DISPOSING OF HIS ENEMIES.
IF MEMORY SERVES, HE EMPLOYED A SIMILAR TRICK TO RID HIMSELF OF ME ALL THOSE YEARS AGO.
OF COURSE, I WAS BARELY CONSCIOUS AT THE TIME--
<HALT! WHO GOES THERE?>
OH SHOCK.
<THIS SECTION OF THE ROYAL PALACE IS RESTRICTED TO AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY!>
<YOU WILL SURRENDER YOURSELF IMMEDIATELY-->
--OR BY THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME BY OUR MAJESTY LORD ATTUMA HIMSELF--
<--YOU WILL BE EXECUTED WHERE YOU STAND!>
WRONG.
FWOOSH

FLASH!
(BY THE SUB-MARINER! WHAT MANNER OF SORCERY ALLOWS YOU TO IGNITE A FLAME THAT BURNS UNDERWATER?!)
(ONLY THE DELIVERER WHO SHALL "BRING FIRE TO THE WATERS WITH A WAVE OF HIS HAND" WIELDS SUCH POWER!)
(VERILY YOU ARE A WITCH AND A BLASPHEMER, GIRL! AND FOR THIS--)
(--YOU MUST DIE!)
WHAK
(I'M SORRY YOU FEEL THAT WAY, BROTHER--)
(--BUT YOUR DEVOTION TO THE ANCIENT TEXT BLINDS YOU TO THE TRUTH.)
(UNFORTUNATELY, THIS ISN'T THE APPROPRIATE FORUM FOR US TO DEBATE THEOLOGY AND THE VALIDITY OF ATAVISTIC SCRIPTURES--)
tick
(--FOR THE SURFACE-WORLD'S LAST BEST HOPE LIES COMATOSE AND HELPLESS ON A RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH--)
(--AND TIME IS A LUXURY I CAN ILL AFFORD TO WASTE!)
ATTUMA HAS CLEARLY PREYED UPON OUR PEOPLE'S SUPERSTITIOUS NATURE TO HIS BEST ADVANTAGE--
--FOMENTING THEIR LATENT FEAR OF ANYTHING THAT BREAKS WITH TRADITION.
I CAN ONLY PRAY THAT THEY ARE NOT ALL AS GULLIBLE AS HE PRESUMES--

MEANWHILE...
IN THE CENTER, WE HAVE HYBRID DOUGLOCK--AN AMALGAMATION OF THE TWO RESULTANT FROM EXPOSURE TO THE TRANSMODE VIRUS LATENT WITHIN WARLOCK.
THE IMAGE ON THE LEFT IS OF A TECHNO-ORGANIC ENTITY KNOWN AS WARLOCK.
ON THE RIGHT IS A MUTANT WHO SUFFERED A RATHER TRAGIC AND PREMATURE DEMISE, BY THE NAME OF DOUG RAMSEY.
IT IS INDEED UNCANNY THAT THE PLANETOID'S GEOLOGICAL COMPOSITION--
--IS SIMILAR TO THE ALIEN'S TECHNO-ORGANIC PHYSIOGNOMY.
I WONDER... COULD THIS PLANETOID HAVE BEEN INFECTED AT SOME POINT BY THE SAME VIRUS?
awoogah awoogah awooga
WHAT IS IT, RICHARDS?
I HATE TO BE THE BEARER OF BAD NEWS--
--BUT WE'VE GOT COMPANY!
ATTENTION, HUMANS! AT THE BEHEST OF LORD ATTUMA, WE BRING A MESSAGE FOR THE LAND-WALKER KNOWN AS DOOM.
I AM DOOM, ATLANTEAN. PRAY YOUR "MESSAGE" DOES NOT DISPLEASE ME...
AND I AM GENERAL DAGIM. LONG HAVE I WAITED TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE--
DISPENSE WITH THE PLEASANTRIES, ICTHYAN. WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?
BEHOLD--LATVERIA! IF YOU DO NOT ACT SWIFTLY--
--BY THE MORROW IT SHALL BE YET ANOTHER FREEDOM OF ATLANTIS SUBMERGED UNDER THE YOKE OF ATTUMA.
MILORD SUBJECTS, A WARRIOR'S SOUL BURNS WITHIN YOUR BOSOM, DOOM.
HE IS CONFIDENT YOU WILL RISE TO THIS CHALLENGE TO YOUR PROUD DOMINION.

ZARK
HEATHENS!!!
STAY HIDDEN IN YOUR UNDERSEA KINGDOM, LACKEY! INFORM YOUR MASTER THAT HE IS AN UNMITIGATED FOOL!
FOR FROM THIS DAY FORTH--DOOM SHALL E'ER CALL HIM ENEMY!
I WISH YOU LUCK, RICHARDS--YOU WILL HAVE TO PERSEVERE WITHOUT ME.
EH? YOU DARE MANHANDLE DOOM?
I DON'T THINK SO.
OPEN YOUR EYES! DON'T YOU SEE?
ATTUMA IS DESPERATE FOR HIS "DIVIDE AND CONQUER" STRATAGEM TO UNDERMINE OUR EFFORTS!
LOOK, I SYMPATHIZE WITH YOUR DILEMMA, BUT WE CANNOT IGNORE THE SHADOW OF ANNIHILATION LOOMING ABOVE US ALL.
IT IS IMPERATIVE WE MAKE CERTAIN CONCESSIONS TO PREVENT THAT SHADOW FROM BLANKETING OUR FUTURE, PLUNGING IT INTO ETERNAL DARKNESS.
THESE ARE AMUSING PLATITUDES--BUT THEY DO NOTHING TO PREVENT THE WHOLESALE SLAUGHTER OF MY PEOPLE.
I KNOW, OLD FRIEND--BUT AS YOU HOLD YOUR HOMELAND DEARER THAN YOUR VERY LIFE SO DO I HOLD MY FAMILY.
AND LOATH AS I AM TO DO SO, I WILL SACRIFICE THEM FOR HUMANITY'S SAKE--PERHAPS THEIR ONLY HOPE LIES IN OUR EFFORTS...
THEN THAT IS WHERE OUR PATHS DIVERGE, FOR LATVERIA IS MY "FAMILY"--

--AND I WILL SACRIFICE MY FAMILY FOR NO ONE. I LEAVE YOU WITH YOUR... HOPE.
BUT IF THE WORLD IS DESTROYED--
--WHETHER IT BE BY ATTUMA OR THAT THING IN ORBIT--
--THEN THERE WON'T BE ANY LATVERIA!
AS LONG AS DOOM SURVIVES--
bzzzzzzzt
--SO SHALL THE FATHERLAND!
bzzzzzzzt
T-TURNING YOUR B-BACK ON THE W-WORLD WILL ONLY H-HASTEN THE INEVITABLE D-DESTRUCTION OF Y-YOUR EMPIRE!
A CLEVER PLOY. BUT YOU CANNOT BAIT ME INTO STAYING WITH CAUSTIC INNUENDOS.
P-PLEASE, VICTOR--THE EARTH N-NEEDS YOU! IT IS NOT A PLOY--IT IS THE TRUTH.
WITHOUT LATVERIA, RICHARDS--
--THERE IS NO EARTH FOR VICTOR VON DOOM.


ATLANTIS...
〈OUR SENSORS HAVE TRACKED DOOM'S RETURN TO LATVERIA, YOUR EMINENCE.〉
〈GOOD. AND WHAT OF THE RAID ON ALCHEMAX?〉*
〈IT PROCEEDS APACE--ALBEIT BY LESS THAN HONORABLE MEANS.〉
〈MOST OF THE PEOPLE ARE SCIENTISTS, NOT SOLDIERS!〉
〈ALL THE MORE REASON WHY THOSE INFIDELS SHOULD PAY FOR THEIR DESECRATION OF THE HOLY SARCOPHAGUS.**〉
*SEE SPIDERMAN 2099 #45-46 FOR MORE!
**ALCHEMAX'S NOVA ATLANTEAN COLONY WAS INADVERTENTLY BUILT ON THE SITE OF NAMOR'S TOMB.
〈CONTINUE YOUR ASSAULT, DAGIM.〉
〈LEAVE NO HUMAN SURVIVORS.〉
AYE, SIR. DAGIM, OUT...
FINALLY.
I HAVE FINALLY PROVEN MY INDISPUTABLE INTELLECTUAL SUPERIORITY OVER THE ACCURSED MISTER FANTASTIC.
SOON, THE LAST REMNANTS OF HOMO SAPIENS WILL BE FOREVERMORE WASHED AWAY FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH--
--AND THE PLANET SHALL ONCE AGAIN BELONG TO HOMO MERMANUS.
TRULY, THIS IS A MAGNIFICENT TIME TO BE ALIVE... WE LIVE IN A TIME OF WONDER.
〈HEAR ME, O WARRIORS OF ATLANTIS! THESE DAYS HOLD MANY GLORIES FOR US.〉
〈FOR NOT ONLY HAVE WE RECLAIMED THE WORLD THAT IS OUR BIRTHRIGHT FROM THE SURFACE DWELLERS--〉
〈--BUT I, ATTUMA, THE RIGHTFUL WARLORD OF ATLANTIS, HAVE ACHIEVED WHAT EVEN NAMOR HIMSELF COULD NE'ER--〉
〈--AND LAID OUR MOST HATED ENEMIES LOW BEFORE OUR FEET!〉
NO! THIS CAN'T BE!
〈BEHOLD, I GIVE YOU--〉
〈--THE FANTASTIC FOUR!!!〉

〈LET THE GAMES BEGIN!!!〉
AWOO AWOO AWOO
I DUNNO WHAT'S WRONG WIT' ME--
--BUT SOMETHIN' INSIDE'S MAKIN' ME WANNA SMASH YOU GUYS UP!
I'M TRYIN' T' FIGHT IT, BUT I CAN'T CONTROL MYSELF!
WHAMMO
YEAH? WELL, IF YOU TRY TO SMASH ME--
--THEN I'M GONNA FRY YOU!
FWOOSH
FFFSHUNK
FFFSHUNK
FFFSHUNK
WHOOLF!
Y-YOUSE GOTTA F-FIGHT IT, K-KID!
'MEMBER WHAT SUZIE SAID? THE WORLD'S COUNTIN' ON US--
--WE G-GOTTA STICK T-T'GETHER!
SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU, BENJAMIN--
--BUT THE ONLY THINGS THAT ARE GOING TO DO ANY "STICKING" AROUND HERE--
SLAM!

--ARE MY INVISIBLE THROWING STARS IN YOUR BIG ROCKY HIDE!
THUD
G-GUTS FEEL LIKE THEY'RE G-GONNA OOZE OUT ANY S-SECOND.
N-NEVER B-BEEN HURT LIKE THIS B-BEFORE. G-GOTTA... F-FIGHT THE P-PAIN...
THUNK THUNK THUNK
NO, SUZIE! DON'T--
ARRGHH!!
HELP, J-JOHNNY... S-SUZIE...
...C-CAN'T...
Urk.
AND AS THE THING SUCCUMBS TO THE WOUNDS INFLICTED BY TWO OF HIS CLOSEST FRIENDS...
THE AUDIENCE IS TREATED TO A SECOND SPECTACLE THAT IS, FOR SOME, EQUALLY AS HORRIFYING AS THE CARNAGE TO WHICH THEY HAVE JUST BORNE WITNESS...
NO! STOP! YOU'RE KILLING HIM!
LOOK AT HER HANDS! SHE POSSESSES THE GIFT!
THE PROPHECY HAS COME TRUE!
SHE IS A DEMON FROM HADES!
FALSE MESSIAH!

HIS STONY FLESH MAKES IT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL IF HE'S EVEN BREATHING.
I CAN'T JUST LET HIM DIE LIKE THIS--
--BUT WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP??
NO! THE FATES CONSPIRE AGAINST ME!
WHISPER CANNOT BE ALIVE!! SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD!!!
KILL THE GIRL, SLAVES!
fsshunnkk
UH OH.
KILL HER, AND MAY HER FOUL PRESENCE SULLY OUR GOLDEN REALM NO MORE!
BY...YOUR...COMMAND!
NEPTUNE GRANT ME STRENGTH...
NEXT MONTH: THE STUNNING CONCLUSION TO THE MOST EPIC 2099 SAGA YET!!!